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ABSTRACT

When all three high schools of the Maine Township High School District in Des Plaines (Illinois) were recognized as outcome accredited by the North Central Association in 1989, the district became the first multi-building district in Illinois to complete the first phase of the Outcome Accreditation/Evaluation Program. The program to integrate critical thinking (CT)--one of the areas targeted for the evaluation--across the high school curriculum is described. A subcommittee of the evaluation steering committee surveyed faculty to determine their beliefs about CT and their interest in learning more about techniques to develop CT among students. In-depth staff development began in September 1989 with a 2-day workshop for 13 teachers and 9 department chairs. The strengths of the plan to integrate CT skills across the curriculum appeared to be: the program is teacher-driven; participants in staff development workshops are volunteers; staff development is mainly conducted by in-house teachers; workshops are conducted in district schools; results are not expected to occur swiftly; and because participants are volunteers, interaction with teachers in other disciplines is promoted. Six appendices contain: (1) the rationale and definition of CT and goals; (2) results of the faculty survey; (3) a report of outcomes for 1989; (4) a proposed agenda for the January conference; (5) one issue of the newsletter of the accreditation process; and (6) an invitation to the staff development workshop in January 1990. (SLD)

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THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF A PROGRAM TO INTEGRATE CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS ACROSS A HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

PREPARED AND PRESENTED BY BETTY DUFFEY

AT THE TENTH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

ON CRITICAL THINKING AND EDUCATIONAL REFORM
Center for Critical Thinking & Moral Critique
Sonoma State University
Rohnert Park, California 94928 USA
August 5-8, 1990

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B. Results of Survey of Faculty Members Re Critical Thinking

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F. Invitation to Staff Development Workshops, January, 1990

MAINE WEST HIGH SCHOOL
DES PLAINES, ILLINOIS

THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF A PROGRAM TO INTEGRATE CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS ACROSS A HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

I. A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE ACCREDITATION PLAN AT DISTRICT 207

Maine Township High School District 207 includes three high schools (Maine East, Maine South, and Maine West) in suburbs Northwest of Chicago, Illinois. When all three were recognized as outcome accredited by the North Central Association in May, 1989, "District 207 became the first multi-building school district in Illinois to complete the first phase of the Outcome Accreditation/Evaluation program."

"By taking advantage of a new approach to evaluation by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, District 207 schools have focused on student successes rather than facilities and activities as past evaluations have done."

"Built on a three-year cycle, Outcome Accreditation/Evaluation first calls for schools to identify target areas." (from Maine Events, a staff newsletter, May/June, 1989)

II. THE PLAN AT MAINE WEST

In the school year 1986-87, a general steering committee was assembled at Maine West with representation from each of the academic departments and the school administration. Several meetings were held to orient the Maine West faculty to the O/A process and to solicit suggestions about target areas.

In 1987-88, Maine West selected four target areas for the N.C.A. outcome accreditation process. These 4 target areas were: reading, critical thinking (CT), writing, and student self-esteem and attitudes toward school.

A sub-committee was established for each of the four target areas with faculty members appointed to co-chair each committee. Representatives from each department were selected for membership on each committee. An N.C.A. visiting team was selected.

We were very fortunate to be able to select as advisor to the CT sub-committee, Mr. Alan Rubin of Oakton Community College (OCC), in Des Plaines, Illinois. Alan was already very involved in the ongoing Critical Literacy Project at OCC. This project has featured continuous staff development with the focus on Reading, Writing, and Thinking Across the Curriculum. In April of 1988, 1989, and 1990, OCC sponsored Conferences on Critical Literacy which attracted presenters and participants from many states and Canada. A fourth annual conference is planned for April, 1991.

III. FOCUS ON CRITICAL THINKING ACTIVITIES AT MAINE WEST

The co-chairs of the CT sub-committee (s-c) are Betty Duffey and Betty Heraty, both of whom are teachers in the Business Department.

A rationale for the target area, a definition of CT, and goals were developed by the s-c. (Appendix A)

A survey was developed and distributed to all faculty members to (1) determine the faculty members' current beliefs about the use of CT by our students; and (2) determine the degree of interest in learning more about techniques identified as helping to develop CT skills. (Results in Appendix B.)

Funds for summer curriculum work were budgeted for 1988 and 1989. Released time from one supervisory period was provided for CT co-chairs in the spring of 1988, and for the school year 1988-89 to permit us time for research. In 1989-90 and 90-91, the co-chairs have also been released from teaching one class because of staff development activities. Funds were made available for attending conferences, and all staff members were encouraged to do this.

The CT s-c had the luxury of time and the opportunity to observe a staff development model, as our formal staff development activities were to begin in the school year 1989-90. The Reading s-c began in 1988-89.

Some outcomes from our activities in summer and fall of 1988 are listed in Appendix C.

Appendix D is a copy of our Institute Program for January 20, 1989, in which the focus was on the work of all sub-committees. All presenters were staff members, and eighteen of them were classroom teachers.

To emphasize the integration of the work of all four sub-committees a Newsletter was started called "West's Vision." Six issues were prepared and distributed to all Maine West personnel in the last two years. Short digests of significant articles are a unique and successful feature. The interested reader is invited to request a copy of the entire article. (First issue of "West's Vision" is Appendix E.)

In-depth staff development for CT purposes began in September, 1989. A 2-day workshop, presented by the co-chairs, was attended by thirteen volunteer teachers. Nine department chairs also attended the first afternoon session on "Problem-Solving" because we had brought in outside speakers for that segment. The workshop focused on six areas: (1) Background of Critical Thinking Movement; (2) Questioning Techniques; (3) Problem-Solving Strategies; (4) Pairs & Groups; (5) Reducing Teacher Lecture Time; and (6) Student Evaluation.

After the workshop we scheduled follow-up meetings with participants every three weeks in smaller groups. The purpose of these meetings was to focus on one of the six areas, and to provide ongoing support for the teachers as they were trying to use new techniques

Slight changes were made, and our two-day workshop was repeated in February, 1990, for ten volunteer teachers. Appendix F is the invitation that went to all faculty in January, 1990, for the CT, Self-Esteem, and Reading workshops. Writing workshops will phase-in this fall, and the other three sub-committees will continue their presentations.

In March, 1990, an evening presentation was made by CT co-chairs to about 30 parents of Maine West students. These were involved members of a "Parents for Scholarship Club." The purpose of the presentation was to inform these parents about the CT part of the NCA project.

IV. OTHER ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE CRITICAL THINKING PLAN

In the summer of 1989, our principal, Dr. James Coburn, made application for our school to join the ASCD Dimensions of Learning Consortium that was being formed. The purpose of this group was to help field test a new training program based on the book Dimensions of Thinking. We were accepted, and a team of three--Dr. Paul Leathem, Assistant Principal, and the two Critical Thinking Co-Chairs have participated in four two-day meetings this year. This consortium consists of 20 teams or individuals from 15 states and Mexico. There will be four more meetings in the coming school year, and we plan to incorporate parts of this program in our continuing staff development program.

Persons from other high schools have received assistance from us in developing their CT programs.

There has been a District-wide plan in place for several years involving many teachers in both Beginner and Intermediate training in the 4-Mat System (Bernice McCarthy's model.)

At Maine West, a Peer Coaching program for teachers has been active for two years, and continues.

We believe that the work of the other three NCA sub-committees impacts very favorably on our efforts to increase students CT skills. In a letter to the CT s-c, our advisor Alan Rubin from Oakton Community College stated:

> "From what we now know about teaching critical thinking, we believe that it is accomplished through the development of critical reading skills, critical writing skills, the skills to work collaboratively, and the development of a self-concept that embraces the notion that I am a thinker and therefore a learner. Those skills and attributes are taught when the student encounters teachers in many, if not all, of his or her classes who incorporate those components into the class content and into the teaching methodology... when the various teachers model those skills and attributes themselves. We believe that the process for developing critical thinking skills is developmental and occurs when the other skills are pretty well along the way to being in place. Critical

thought is both a process and a product that comes about through exercise of the critical skills..."

V. SUMMARY

The strengths of our plan at Maine West to integrate Critical Thinking Skills Across the Curriculum appear to be:

(1) It is "teacher-driven" as opposed to being led by administrators. Co-chairs of all NCA sub-committees are classroom teachers, except one who is a Guidance Counselor.

(2) Participants in the staff development workshops are volunteers.

(3) The staff development activities are mainly conducted by in-house teachers. A minimum of outside presenters are employed. This provides a level of confidence among the attendees because we are familiar with their classroom problems. We are not "ivory tower specialists."

(4) The workshops are conducted at our school. Teachers appreciate being able to check with their substitute during the day. We are given "first-class" treatment from food services. Breakfast and lunch are provided, which is not the standard cafeteria fare. Co-chairs work with the food services manager to select menus.

(5) Results are not expected to occur quickly. It is recognized by the administration that this is a long-range program. Teachers have to be influenced to change their behaviour and gradually to make an impact on changing student behaviour.

(6) Because the participants are volunteers, teachers are interacting with teachers from other disciplines more than has ever occurred in prior staff development activities. Workshops are designed to recognize the expertise of the participants, and to encourage them to be active with role-playing, and other group activities. The format is not lecture-based.

VI. CREDIT IS GIVEN TO THE FOLLOWING FOR HELP IN DEVELOPING OUR PROGRAM

The Eight and Ninth Annual International Conferences on Critical Thinking and Educational Reform, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California

The First, Second, and Third Critical Literacy Conferences sponsored by Oakton Community College in Chicago, Illinois

Articles or books by: Ronald S. Brandt; Arthur L. Costa; Dr. R. H. Ennis; Richard W. Paul; Vincent Ruggiero; William M. Taylor, Political Science Instructor at Oakton Community College.

Dr. James L. Coburn, Principal of Maine West High School; and
Dr. James L. Elliott, Superintendent of District 207

Appendix A

RATIONALE

Expressions of concern and "the recommendations that thinking skills be taught at every level of education have come, not from bureaucrats" but from prestigious business, professional, and educational organizations.

Given the above perception of a general decline in students' higher order thinking skills over the last few decades; given our educational philosophy that Maine Township students are entitled to the benefits of the highest quality of education available, the development of critical thinking skills is both a necessary and vital outcome-based objective for the North Central Evaluation of Maine West High School.

DEFINITION OF CRITICAL THINKING

We would like to use the global definition for critical thinking as stated by Dr. R. H. Ennis of the University of Illinois at Champaign. He defines it as "reasonable, reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do."

GOALS

We believe the following goal to be appropriate:

To develop or reinforce in students' habits and skills which enhance both:

A. the production of ideas, and

B. the evaluation of ideas.

Betty Duffey and Betty Heraty
Co-Chairs of Critical Thinking
Sub-Committee

August 22, 1988

Appendix B

NOTES FOR NCA WEST VISION MEETING, MARCH 16, 1989, 3:00 P.M.

I SURVEY OF FACULTY MEMBERS RE CRITICAL THINKING (CT)

a. 10 questions addressed the faculty members beliefs about the use of desirable CT skills by MW students.

Answers to 9 of the 10 questions indicated a majority of the teachers believed that 25-49% of students used the specific skill. In only one question (whether students actively identify problems in course content) did a significant proportion of teachers believe that 50-74% of the students do this. (33% of the teachers)

CONCLUSION: It appears that there are many CT skills in which student performance can be enhanced through the teaching of these skills within the content of courses.

b. 12 questions addressed the teachers' interest in learning more about techniques identified as helping to develop CT skills.

There appears to be a high degree of interest in learning specific techniques; questioning techniques (44%); modeling a variety of problem-solving techniques (38%); use of simulations (27%); use of real-world problems (47%); thinking exercises in reading and writing assignments (39%); and collaborative learning strategies (30%)

c. 7 questions addressed the degree of teachers' interest in CT in-service, and particular formats for in-service.

In the following four areas, more than 50% of teachers responded positively.

Learn more about integration of CT skills in course content (54%)
Testing students to determine if they are thinking critically (57%)
Would like to attend one-time workshop on CT (62%)
Work with other teachers to create CT materials (51%)

II. TEST FOR STUDENTS

A sub-committee researched the tests "out there" which are used for measuring CT skills. Two tests emerged as most significant. These are: (1) Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal, and (2) the Cornell Critical Thinking Test, Level X.

Further review and study causes us to recommend the Watson-Glaser.

Appendix C
4/19/89

The following are outcomes of the Critical Thinking subcommittee work (as well as the other subcommittees).

(1) The publication of the first ~~three~~ four issues of "West Vision."

(2) Presentations re Critical Thinking at the Management and staff meetings on 8/22/88 and 8/25/88.

(3) Three presentations at the 1/20/89 Maine West Institute Day. (Duffey, Kenyon, & Osborne.)

(4) Karen Kenyon's presentation to the State Conference on Physical Education in November, 1988 re Critical Thinking.

(5) A survey that was distributed to faculty members on 1/25/89.

(6) The start of a handbook on Critical Thinking lesson plans with the material prepared by Karen Kenyon and Rog Osborne from their disciplines.

The indirect outcomes are more difficult to measure. But at least two of which we are aware are:

(1) The presentation made by three Science teachers on "Environmental Issues" at the 1/20/89 Institute Day.

(2) The increasing awareness of the need for Critical Thinking Instruction on the part of many faculty members.

Betty Duffey

Betty Heraty

Appendix D
(1 of 3 sides)

January 20, 1989

Institute/Conference

Program

MAINE WEST HIGH SCHOOL

Motivation –

Achievements –

Inspiration –

Net

Excellence

**This Institute is held under the auspices of
Dr. Richard J. Martwick, Superintendent,
Educational Service Region,
Cook County, Illinois**

(2 of 3 sides)

MAINE TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL WEST
INSTITUTE PROGRAM

JANUARY 20, 1989

PROGRAM

7:30 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. **Coffee and Rolls** — **Student Cafeteria**

8:00 a.m. - 8:45 a.m. **FIRST WORKSHOP SESSIONS: CRITICAL THINKING**

"If the Socratic Method Can Be Used To Teach Accounting, It Can Be Used in Any Curriculum"
Betty Duffey — *Room R-209*

"Critical Thinking For Your Life!"
Roger Osborne — *Room C-112*

"Critical Thinking Concepts in Physical Education"
Karen Kenyon — *Room L-101*

"The Role of the Humanities in Developing Reading, Writing, and Critical Thinking Across the Curriculum"
Sheree Gilbert, Lou Thetard — *Room A-201*

8:50 a.m. - 9:35 a.m. **SECOND WORKSHOP SESSIONS: WRITING**

"Writing to Learn - Across the Curriculum"
Harriet Johnson Naden — *Room A-201*

"Scoring Papers Holistically"
Dan Silkowski — *Room R-209*

"What is a Good Writing Assignment?"
Betty Brockelman — *Room L-101*

(3 of 3 pgs)

INSTITUTE PROGRAM - JANUARY 20, 1989
CONTINUED

9:40 a.m. - 10:35 a.m. THIRD WORKSHOP SESSIONS: READING/SELF ESTEEM

* *"Imaging, A Reading Strategy for All Seasons and for All Content Areas"*
Al Brower, John Nugent, Mary Kay Walsh — *Room L-10*

"Take the "L" Out of Low-Level Learners: A Visual Approach"
Linda Farrell, Audrey Haugan — *Room C-20*

"A Gift of Self Esteem"
Eldon Burk, Sid Drain — *Room R-20*

"Environmental Issues"
Connie Brownell, Susie Davis, Elaine Moughan — *Room A-201*

10:35 a.m. - 10:55 a.m. BREAK — **Student Cafeteria**

10:55 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. WEST'S VISION (NCA) SUB-COMMITTEES

Writing Across the Curriculum — *Room A-[illegible]8*

Reading Across the Curriculum — *Room B-202*

Critical Thinking — *Room A-113*

Student Self Esteem and Attitudes Toward School — *Room C-106*

10:55 a.m. - 11:35 a.m. FOURTH WORKSHOP SESSION

"The Write Place"
Paula Williams — *Rotary Reading Room*

11:40 a.m. - 12:20 p.m. FIFTH WORKSHOP SESSION

"Peer Coaching"
Ruth Nickelson — *Room L-101*

12:25 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. SIXTH WORKSHOP SESSION

"Research for Writing"
Kay Hicks, Bill Lindeman — *C*

Appendix E

WEST'S VISION

Maine West NCA Staff Newsletter

October 1988, Vol I, No.1

How it all began

The idea for this newsletter was a product of "group thinking." We kept seeing the necessity to integrate the efforts of all four sub-committees for NCA. Reading, Thinking, and Writing Across the Curriculum, and the Affective Domain--sub-title, Helping Students feel Better About Themselves--must work like four hands clasped together. The eight co-chairs: Marys--Gienko and Walsh; Bettys--Duffey & Heraty; Mary Mueller and Dan Silkowski; and Gay Jacobs and Marshall Ellenstein--have been beating our brains out for a means to spread our enthusiasm for this project to the total Maine West staff.

One result of the "brain-beating" process is this newsletter.

We feel good about what we are doing. We've been doing much critical thinking about this project. Now we're writing about it, and we encourage you to read it, think critically about its contents, and communicate with us.

The title WEST'S VISION must be credited to Dr. Tom Shirley, principal of Wheeling High School, and one of the two outside advisors for the total NCA project at West. In May of this year, there was a meeting of the total NCA committee with Dr. Shirley and Dr. Larry Smiley (the other outside advisor) from North Dakota. Near the end of the day, after all four committees had made our reports, Dr. Shirley asked us, "What is your vision for Maine West as a result of this NCA process?" We were slightly speechless at the time, and now know why.

Our vision is ever-expanding, as we continue in the process--and this faculty newsletter is one part of that vision. And just as we want to include YOU in the WEST VISION, we also want to include YOU in this newsletter.

Dr. Coburn responds

Question: Dr. Coburn, here at West, we have a highly "seasoned" faculty. Many of our staff members have seen several NCA evaluations come and go. They have the feeling that this too "will pass in time," and it will be "business as usual." Is there something significantly different about this NCA evaluation?

Response: Definitely--I have personally been through NCA evaluations since 1964 during which time I have served as chairperson for the building steering committee and have watched the development of recommendations for Maine West most of which were impossible to implement because of external constraints such as Illinois School Code or available funding. More importantly, those recommendations in most cases related to things such as equipment, building structure, pupil-student ratio--recommendations which ignored or circumvented the teaching-learning process.

"For the first time, we have the opportunity to work together to develop new strategies for teaching," said Dr. Coburn.

This outcome-based evaluation program is devoted solely to the classroom, to the teaching-learning process. For the first time, we have the opportunity to work together to develop new strategies for teaching--strategies I predict will be used for years to come, concluded Dr. Coburn.

Quotable quotes

"Children are not vessels to be filled but lamps to be lighted." Author Unknown.

Seen on a T-shirt—"Those who can — TEACH! And those who can't, switch to a less noble occupation."

Maine Township High School West
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In this premier issue, the focus is on Critical Thinking research.....

Math tutor finds strength in numbers

Teachers shouldn't be too surprised to hear that Chinese-American students at Berkeley, California seemed to thrive on calculus.

What some might find surprising is that a way has been found to apply the principles inherent in the success of the Chinese-American students to encourage other students to excel—notably blacks and hispanics, possibly even caucasians. While the principles have been tested with math students in college, they appear to be appropriate for secondary math students and those in other disciplines.

If you would like to read a short article on the research, please leave a note with your name and the title Math Tutor in box# 20.

Twelve ways to identify a critical thinker

Arthur L. Costa, Professor of Education at California State University in Sacramento, and President of the Executive Council of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, has written an article in which he identifies 12 characteristics of intelligent behaviors that both teachers and parents can observe and teach. Some of the characteristics are:

1. Persistence...
2. Decreasing impulsivity
3. Listening to others—with understanding and empathy
4. Flexibility in thinking
5. Awareness of one's own thinking process (metacognition).

If you are sufficiently intrigued by this sample, and would like to read the entire article, What Human Beings Do When They Behave Intelligently and How They Can Become More So, please leave a note in Box # 20 with your name and the title "12 ways" for a copy of the article.

This is an extremely "readable" article, and will help you to get a "quick-fix" on what the Critical Thinking movement is about.

Aerobic activities improve creativity

The positive effects of regular aerobic exercise on the body's appearance and its general well-being are readily apparent to most exercisers.

Many folks have long suspected that such activities also sharpen one's thinking capacity. Now there is evidence that this is so.

A report in Prevention Magazine tells about the research conducted by Joan C. Gondola, from City University of New York. Ms. Gondola gave standard tests of creativity to college students before and after they participated in an exercise program. And she found significant gains in creativity following exercise. We have written to her for more information.

However, don't delay starting that aerobic exercise program until we receive the information! The benefits will accrue immediately.

If neither biking, running, nor swimming, fits your life-style, try WALKING. It is probably the least expensive, and most enjoyable option available. To relieve the seeming boredom if you walk alone, get a WALKMAN and listen to books, music, or other tapes.

The whimsy corner

From the Quiplet Winners List distributed by Quill Office Supplies, we submit some interesting new words for the English language. In this issue, we will only print the words. You think about what these words mean, and check your definitions against the authentic ones in the next issue of this newsletter.

1. Ermanseaum
2. Memoander
3. Brainfade
4. Ourgangization
5. Postnotal Syndrome
6. Kleptopensia
7. Stereotype (new meaning)
8. Holidaze
9. Diskintegrate
10. Roisduds

Submit your definitions to box # 20. You may win a prize.

WEST'S VISION

Appendix F

To: All Faculty
From: Betty D. and Betty H., Gay and Linda, Mary and Mary Kay

THIS IS IT! THE ONE AND ONLY OPPORTUNITY TO SIGN UP FOR ONE (OR MORE) OF THE FABULOUS TWO-DAY INSERVICE PROGRAMS PRESENTED BY THE ABOVE PAIRS OF FANTASTIC AND FUN FACULTY, OFFERED FOR YOU DURING THE SPRING SEMESTER OF 1990.

Tuesday, Feb. 6, and Wednesday, Feb. 7
CRITICAL THINKING

What do you teach in our varied curriculum--from A(Art) to S(Speech and Drama?? How are your students classified --Accelerated, AP, Regular, Remedial, or Special Education??

Regardless of your answers, you and your students will benefit from your active involvement in the 2-day inservice and follow-up sessions on "Developing and Improving the Teaching of Critical Thinking Skills in all Content Areas."

The focus of the program will be on (1) Problem Solving Strategies; (2) Student Learning Groups, including pairs and triads; (3) Questioning techniques including the Socratic Method; and, (5) Student Evaluation.

Tuesday, February 14, and Wednesday, February 15
SELF-ESTEEM

We can enhance students' self-esteem and motivation for learning. Research-based evidence has shown that self-concept plays an important role in school achievement. The self-esteem inservice will examine self-concept along with other issues such as: discipline, effective communication, problem solving, confluent education, and cooperative learning.

Wednesday, April 18, and Thursday, April 19
READING STRATEGIES IN CONTENT AREA CLASSES

The reading inservice focuses on recent research about reading in content area classes. You will learn specific reading strategies to use before, during, and after a reading assignment to help your students comprehend what they read more effectively. These strategies also complement learning style theory and lesson planning learned in 4-MAT.

Time and collaborative planning to develop lesson plans implementing appropriate newly learned strategies are built into the inservice.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT ALL OF THE INSERVICE PROGRAMS: Teachers who sign up will be provided release time and a substitute, if desired, for follow-up activities for all three of the inservice programs. No more than one class period a week will be expected for these activities, in some cases, less time.

To sign up, check the appropriate line below and return to Dr. Leathem by Wednesday, December 13.

.....

_____Critical Thinking, 2/6 and 2/7

_____Self-Esteem, 2/14 and 2/15

_____Reading Strategies for Content Area Classes, 4/18 and 4/19

_____
name